THE OTHER ROOM

LYMAN ABBOTT

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The Other Room

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Lyman Abbott

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A French deist was once arguing against the immortality of the soul. His Christian friend heard him through in silence, then replied: "Probably you are right; probably you are not immortal, but I AM."

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THE OTHER ROOM

THE OTHER ROOM

THE city is full of strangers. Every house has guests. Tents are set up on the surrounding hills. Pilgrims have come from far to join in the annual celebration of the national birthday. The general atmosphere is one of festivity, but not of hilarity. With the sacred memories of the past mingle sorrowful appreciation of the national humiliation in the present; but the national celebration is also

an occasion for family reunions, and these give to the Paschal Feast a domestic flavor like that of our own Thanksgiving Day.

Into an upper chamber the Master has come with his disciples to share in this national celebration and to give to the feast a new significance. The solemnities of even that hour have not been sufficient to expel petty ambitions from the hearts of the disciples, and they have quarreled with one another as to who should take precedence in the seats at the table. The Master has waited until the unseemly wrangle is over and they have settled the insignificant ques-

tion for themselves. Then he has taken the ewer and the basin, and in washing their feet has performed for them the service which it did not occur to any one to offer to his brother disciple or even to the Master himself.

Subdued if not saddened by the rebuke, they have listened appalled to his declaration that one of them should betray him, another should deny him, the rest should forsake him in his last hours. At last they begin to believe what he had often told them, that the machinations of his enemies would prove apparently successful, that he would be arrested, convicted, sentenced to a shameful

death, and the sentence would be executed. Then, as the coming events cast their dark shadows before, he utters those ever-memorable but often misunderstood words: "Let not your heart be troubled; ye have faith in God, have faith also in me. In my Father's house are many dwelling-places; if it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a room for you?"

The universe is God's house. This world is not the only habitat for the living. In his house are many rooms. Death is only pushing aside the portière and passing from one room to another.

In this figure is found the key to Christ's instructions, and so to the Christian faith respecting death and immortality.

It is not well to spend much time in endeavoring to pierce the impenetrable curtain and see what lies on the other side. It is best for us to put the main strength of our thought, the main stress of our purpose, on the duties which we have to perform, the service we have to render, the Father's will which we are appointed to fulfil in the room in which we are now living. Yet since death is continually drawing from our side our companions into the other room, it

is well occasionally to reflect upon it, that we may at least endeavor to banish the evil thoughts that torment us, and teach our hearts also not to be troubled nor afraid.

No philosophy is adequate to solve the mystery of life; none is large enough to include all its contradicting phenomena. He who teaches us to speak to our Father who is in heaven as though he were at our side, also compares him to a householder who has gone into a far country and left his estate in the charge of his servants. Both teachings find their confirmation in Christian experience. Sometimes God seems to be

an absentee God whom we cannot reach. Sometimes he seems "closer than breathing" and "nearer than hands and feet." He comes and goes through the open door, now seen, now unseen, but never distant. My father was the head of a school in Boston years ago. After the opening exercises he would often go out of the school-room, leaving the hundred girls without teacher or monitor, absolutely free, absolutely unwatched, with neither promise of reward nor fear of penalty to preserve order, for he would test the girls and see what kind they were, that he might make true girls out of them. So sometimes God

seems to leave us a little while without the vision of his presence, with neither penalty nor reward apparent before us, that he may both test and see what manner of children we are, and that he may make out of us children of God who follow righteousness and eschew evil not because we are watched, not in hope of reward or fear of penalty, but because we are learning to love righteousness and hate evil. At these times he has but gone into the other room, unseen but not far distant. At other times he is in the midst of us. He who says, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the

world," also says, "It is expedient for you that I go away." Sometimes we talk with him, and our hearts burn within us while the strange converse goes on. He appears to us as we sit at the table with him, and he blesses and breaks and gives the bread of communion to us; then vanishes. This appearing and disappearing Christ, this strange entrance which he makes into our life at unexpected times and places, should suffice to teach us that the other room is not far away, that, seen or unseen, he is always close at hand.

Where he is are those who are banished from our sight, but not

from our presence. "To depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better," is Paul's definition of dying; but if Christ is with his Church, and Paul is with Christ, Paul is with the Church. If your mother, your child, your friend is with Christ, and Christ is with you, your mother, your child, your friend is with you. "This day," says Christ upon the cross to the penitent thief, "thou shalt be with me in Paradise." Yet Christ, rising from the dead, appeared to his disciples upon the earth. If he was with his disciples, and the penitent thief was with him, then neither he nor the penitent thief

was in "a happy land far, far away." Paradise is not a distant country; it is only the other room.

All popular errors have in them some measure of truth. It is the truth, not the error, that makes them popular. I am not a Spiritualist. There are many reasons why I am not. The spiritualistic mediums have been too often proved arrant impostors; against fraudulent pretense by the spirits themselves, if spirits there are, there is no protection; the method of their communicating and the subject-matter of their communications are alike repellent to common sense and to

refined feeling; "by their fruits ye shall know them," and Spiritualism has no fruit of public service and little of enduring comfort to show: for these reasons I am not a Spiritualist. But Spiritualism would never have had the power which it once possessed and is now losing had it not borne witness to the truth which the Church of Christ has often ignored, and sometimes denied, that death is not cessation of life but only transition, and that the dead are not dead but living, are not even departed, but living near at hand, having only stepped across the threshold into the other room.

The dream of poets that our unseen friends are friends still, and minister to us in services which we but dimly recognize, in counsels which strangely guide us, though we know not whence they come, is more than a dream. Poets also see. Their witness to the invisible realities is not to be discarded. Their prophesying we are not to despise; and with rare exceptions they have always believed and taught us to believe:

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
I have thee still, and I rejoice;
I prosper, circled with thy voice;
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

IN DARKNESS

IN DARKNESS

BEFORE Christ brought life and immortality to light, death was the slayer of man's hopes. It left love alive, but love without hope is poignant sorrow. It is said that in the ancient Greek cemeteries no inscription of hope is ever to be found. The inscriptions are all sacred to the memory of the past; none of them is radiant with anticipations of the future. It is true that even to the heathen death did

not end all. They believed in something after death, but they knew not what — a vague, shadowy, unsatisfactory immortality. Homer makes the dead Achilles say:

I would be
A laborer on earth and serve for hire
Some man of mean estate, who makes
scant cheer,
Rather than reign over all who have
gone down
To death.

For the Hades of the heathen was a shadowy abode in which there was neither voice, nor sight, nor life — only the mere shadow of a life, and the mere echo of a voice, and the dim pretense of a vision.

The foundation of this pagan conception of death is the pagan conception of life, which identifies the spirit with the body, the organist with the organ on which he plays, and through which he expresses himself. When the body decayed, the spirit seemed to them either to have ceased to exist or to have lost all its power of life, to be either non-existent or but the shadow of a reality. So they made pathetic endeavors to preserve the body from decay; embalmed it and sealed it up in great stone sarcophagi, strangely imagining that by arresting the progress of decay they could preserve the subtle spirit of life.

Or sometimes, as in the case of the North American Indians, they buried the implements of warfare with the warrior, or the horse with the horseman, comforting themselves with a childish imagination, which was less than a belief, that so they would facilitate the disembodied spirit in continuing in another world the pursuits which had occupied him here.

The conception of Hades current among the Hebrews hardly transcended that of other ancient peoples. Neither in Moses nor in the prophets is there found any clear conception of life after death. The writers of the Old Testament Scrip-

tures either identify the spirit with the body and so consider that the death of the body ends all, or conceive of the spirits of the departed as dwelling in a prison-house, a dark and gloomy under-world. Thus Job, protesting against the injustice of life, laments the untimely death of man:

For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut
down, that it will sprout again,
And that the tender branch thereof will
not cease.
Though the root thereof wax old in the
earth,
And the stock thereof die in the
ground;
Yet through the scent of water it will
bud,

And put forth boughs like a plant.
But man dieth, and wasteth away:
Yea, man giveth up the ghost, and
where is he?
As the waters fail from the sea,
And the river decayeth and drieth
up;
So man lieth down and riseth not:
Till the heavens be no more, they shall
not awake,
Nor be roused out of their sleep.

Thus the Psalmist characterizes Sheol as the land of forgetfulness:

Wilt thou show wonders to the dead?
Shall they that are deceased arise and
praise thee?
Shall thy loving-kindness be declared
in the grave?
Or thy faithfulness in Destruction?

Shall thy wonders be known in the dark?
And thy righteousness in the land of
forgetfulness?

Thus to Hezekiah death is the end of communion with God and of hope for humanity:

I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the
Lord in the land of the living:
I shall behold man no more with the
inhabitants of the world.
Mine age is removed, and is carried
away from me as a shepherd's tent:
I have rolled up like a weaver my life;
he will cut me off from the loom:
From day even to night wilt thou make
an end of me. . . .
For the grave cannot praise thee, death
cannot celebrate thee:
They that go down into the pit cannot
hope for thy truth.

Even Isaiah, the most spiritual of the prophets, conceives of the place of the dead as a dwelling-place of shadows from whom the strength of life is departed. His picture of the welcome of the King of Babylon to the land of death graphically illustrates the Hebraic conception prior to the coming of Christ: [1]

How still is the despot become, how
still is the raging!
Jehovah has broken the staff of the
wicked, the rod of the tyrants,
Which smote peoples in passion with
stroke unremitting,
Which trampled the nations in anger,
unchecked was his trampling!

[1] Translation of Dr. T. K. Cheyne, slightly altered.

Still and at rest, the whole earth, into
shoutings of triumph break they;
At thy fate the pine-trees rejoice and
Lebanon's cedars, saying:
No woodman comes up against us since
thou art laid low.

Sheol beneath is startled because of
thee, expecting soon thine arrival;
For thee the shades it arouses, all the
bell-wethers of mankind;
It makes arise from their thrones all the
kings of the nations.
They all address thee . . ., and say to
thee:
Thou, too, art made strengthless as we
are — to us hast thou been leveled!
Brought down to Sheol is thy pride and
the twang of thy harps;
Beneath thee corruption is spread, with
worms art thou covered.

How art thou fallen from heaven, O
radiant one, Son of the Dawn!
How art thou struck down to the
ground, to lie a stiff corpse upon
corpses!
And thou, thou didst say in thy heart:
The heavens will I scale,
Above the stars of God will I exalt my
throne,
I will sit on the Mount of Assembly in
the recesses of the North,
I will mount above even the hills of the
clouds, I will match the Most High.
Nathless thou art brought down to
Sheol, to the very recesses of the pit.

They who see thee, on thee do they
gaze and thee they consider, saying:
Is this he who startled the earth, who
shook kingdoms,

Who made the world a desert, and broke
down its cities,
Who sent not his prisoners back free,
each one to his house?
Kings of nations, all of them, repose in
high estate,
But thou among the slain art flung
down, among those who are pierced
with the sword,
Who go down to the very base of the
pit, as a carcass trodden under foot.

It is said that every type of human development can be found in the present century — the stone age, the iron age, the bronze age; the cliff-dwellers, the lake-dwellers; slavery, serfdom, feudalism, the wage system; fetishism, polytheism,

idolatry, spiritual worship. It is certain that the old pagan darkness hangs like a pall over the Christian burial-places; it is symbolized by the black crape which we hang upon our doors; it is expressed in the gloomy utterances of many a funeral discourse; it is embodied in some of our most beautiful hymns. Phœnicians or Egyptians might have sung:

Through sorrow's night and danger's path,
Amid the deepening gloom,
We soldiers of an injured King
Are marching to the tomb.

But no followers of Christ who believe in his resurrection, who be-

lieve in him who brought life and immortality to light, ought ever to sing so pagan a stanza. Nevertheless, they do. Paganism still identifies the person with the body which he occupied, still seals the body up in a coffin or casket, still follows it to the burial-place, still thinks of the loved one as lying in the grave, still goes there to sit and grieve, tortured by the strange imagination that he is where his moldering tenement is mingling with the dust, still marches with Henry Kirke White only "to the tomb" and looks not beyond, still seeks the living among the dead, still asks for comfort only from sorrowful

memories, not from radiant hopes, or still imagines the friend as wrapped in a long and dreary sleep, awaiting resurrection on some far-distant ascension day. This paganism is not less pagan because it uses conventional Christian forms in its mourning, sings Christian hymns for its dirges, and puts a Christian cross upon the unchristian tombstone.

THE LIGHT-BRINGER

THE LIGHT-BRINGER

IF Christ was not the first one in human history to teach the absolute continuity of life, he was the first one who ever succeeded in inducing the world to listen to the message. It is never safe to utter a sweeping negative, but I doubt whether the teaching of the continuity of life can be found either in pagan or in Jewish literature prior to the time of Christ. This was the essential character of his mes-

sage, underlying alike his utterances, his quiet assumptions, and his silences.

Life is continuous; there is not a break; there is not a sleep and a future awakening; there is not a shadow-land from which, by and by, the spirits will be summoned to be reunited to the embalmed corpses; life goes on without a single break: such was the essence of Christ's message. Like all other philosophical statements, this summary must be gathered from his teaching rather than looked for in explicit and definite statement; but it is not ambiguous on that account. It is expressed by his promises. I

give unto you, he said, eternal life. He gives it here and now; it is a present possession. Eternal life the Pharisees thought was to come in some final, far-off resurrection. Christ said, You *have* eternal life if you believe in the Son of God. It is indicated in what he said to Martha when he came to the tomb of Lazarus. He said, Thy brother shall rise again. She said, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Christ said, No, you are mistaken; "whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." For him who has faith in the Messiah there is no death; "I am the resurrection

and the life." The believer takes that resurrection and lives on with an unbroken life. The thread in the weaver's loom is not cut; it simply disappears from human vision.

The same truth is implicit in his last words to his disciples: You think I am going to disappear, to be as though I were not. Not at all. I go back to my Father, and yet in going back to my Father I do not go away from you. I live, my Father liveth with me, I live with him, I live with you, I will come again and make my abode with you. My life does not break off, does not carry me away from

you; I continue to be in your presence and companionship more than ever before. It is for my advantage that I should go, for I am going to my Father; it is for your advantage that I should go, because I can serve you better, live more with you, be closer to you, than I ever was in the flesh.

This teaching is intimated in the three resurrections which Christ wrought. He comes to the maiden and says, She is not dead; she is sleeping. He takes her by the hand and says, Arise! He puts back the living soul into the tenement. Yes, the tent had fallen down, and he calls the tenant back,

reërects the tent, and puts her in it. He meets the boy borne on the open bier. The two strange processions meet — the one a jubilant throng flocking after the Life-Giver, the other a mourning throng flocking after the bier — the procession of life, the procession of death. He stops them both, and takes the young man by the hand and says, I say, Arise! and calls back the spirit and puts it in the frame again, and gives the boy back to the mother. He comes to Lazarus. The message is the same: There is no death; he is not dead, he is asleep. And then when the disciples do not under-

stand, he says, He is dead. But at his bidding they roll away the stone, and he calls to Lazarus, as though to indicate that Lazarus was not beyond the reach of his voice, and the spirit comes back and fills again the body and animates it. Lazarus is not far off, Lazarus is not dead, Lazarus is living and close at hand.

The teaching of Christ symbolized in these three resurrections wrought by him has been beautifully expressed by Rossiter W. Raymond in a poem which has given comfort to many hearts, and which I hope through this reprinting here may give comfort to many more:

THE LIGHT-BRINGER

CHRISTUS CONSOLATOR

Beside the dead I knelt for prayer,
And felt a presence as I prayed.
Lo! it was Jesus standing there.
He smiled: "Be not afraid!"

"Lord, thou hast conquered death, we know;
Restore again to life," I said,
"This one who died an hour ago."
He smiled: "She is not dead!"

"Asleep then, as thyself didst say;
Yet thou canst lift the lids that keep
Her prisoned eyes from ours away!"
He smiled: "She doth not sleep!"

"Nay then, tho' haply she do wake,
And look upon some fairer dawn,

Restore her to our hearts that ache!"
He smiled: "She is not gone!"

"Alas! too well we know our loss,
Nor hope again our joy to touch,
Until the stream of death we cross."
He smiled: "There is no such!"

"Yet our belovèd seem so far,
The while we yearn to feel them near,
Albeit with thee we trust they are."
He smiled: "And I am here!"

"Dear Lord, how shall we know that they
Still walk unseen with us and thee,
Nor sleep, nor wander far away?"
He smiled: "Abide in me."

I believe in this teaching of Jesus Christ because I believe in him.

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He was not a philosopher groping after truth, discovering it by research and leaving us to follow his method to the same result; he was a faithful and true witness. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen": this note of personal assurance runs through all his teaching. One has but to compare the consolatory words with which Socrates closes the "Phædo," and the words with which Christ consoles his disciples in the last interview before his crucifixion, to see the difference between a philosopher searching for the truth concerning an unknown world, and the Divine Man testifying to the

truth within his own knowledge respecting that unknown world. I believe that he knew what he was talking about, that he was not deceived by his own illusions, that he was not mistaking his hopes for assurances, that he was not an enthusiast who thought that the phantasmagoria of a day-dream was an assured reality, that when he said, "In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places," he uttered neither the guess of a sibyl, the hope of a prophet, nor the conclusion of a philosopher; he uttered the testimony of a witness to a life of which he had personal and familiar knowledge.

THE FIRST-FRUITS OF THEM THAT SLEPT

THE FIRST-FRUITS OF THEM THAT SLEPT

THE resurrection of Jesus Christ was not an extraordinary event; it was an extraordinary evidence of an ordinary event. Every death is a resurrection. Death is the separation of the soul from the body. The organist rises from his seat and leaves the instrument on which he has been playing. The instrument crumbles into dust, the organist still lives.

"Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust"; but the spirit to God who gave it. Death is dust to dust, ashes to ashes; the resurrection is the spirit to God who gave it: the two are simultaneous.

Jesus Christ was not raised from the dead by a power acting on him from without. He had in himself the power of an endless life. He was himself the resurrection and the life, and therefore immune from death. Death had no dominion over him. He laid down his life and he took it again, because he had power to lay it down and to take it again. The life was continuous, unbroken. What was re-

markable was not that his life was thus continuous and unbroken, that when his body went to the grave his spirit returned to his Father; what was remarkable was the ocular demonstration afforded to his disciples of this before unrecognized truth. Whether their eyes were opened and they saw him in his spiritual body, not unclothed but clothed upon, or whether his soul returned to animate the body which he had left, it is neither possible nor important for us to know. The important and the only important fact is that the continuity of his life was visibly attested to his disciples, and from this visible at-

testation of the continuity of his life they drew their faith and hope and courage; on this ocular demonstration that he was still living, that it was not in the power of Pilate to put him to death, or the broken heart to slay him, or the tomb to hold him in prison, the Church, and with it organized Christianity, is historically founded. For Christianity is not merely a new ethical philosophy; it is a great historic fact—the fact that the World-Deliverer has come, that death has had no power over him, that he is still with his Church to the end of time, conquering and to conquer.

What the New Testament represents as true respecting Jesus Christ, it represents as true of Christ's followers. He is the first-fruits of them that sleep. Their resurrection is like his resurrection, their life is like his life, as their death is like his death. They are not raised from the dead by a power acting on them from without; they rise from the dead as the bird from its egg, as the plant from its seed. The sons of God have in themselves the immortality of their Father. He that liveth and believeth in Christ does not die and rise again from the dead—he shall never die. Paul follows after

Christ that he may know the power of his resurrection. Eternal life is not a gift to be bestowed on the child of God hereafter; he *hath* eternal life. Immortality is not a bequest to be by and by received; it is a present possession.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is therefore not a miraculous prophecy of a future resurrection; it is a visible witness of a present fact. It attests the power of the divine life in all the sons of God. As the germinating of a single seed is evidence of a dormant power of life in all similar seeds, so the uprising of this one Son of God is a demonstration of the dormant life in

all sons of God. As a caterpillar, seeing one of his kin enter a chrysalis and emerge a butterfly, might reason that he entered his tomb only to prepare for his resurrection, so the Christian, seeing the unconquerable life of his Lord, thereby interprets the intimations of immortality in his own soul. We always find the tomb empty and only the grave-clothes lying there. While we, like Mary, weep at the grave, our friend, like Christ, unrecognized, stands at our side and speaks our name. The angels always wonder to find us still seeking the living among the dead. Christ's resurrection interprets and illustrates

his saying that the gates of Hades shall not prevail against his Church. The stone of the tomb is always rolled away, the dead have always emerged from it.

Not spilt like water on the ground,
Not wrapped in dreamless sleep
profound,
Not wandering in unknown despair
Beyond thy voice, thy arm, thy
care,
Not left to die like fallen tree:
Not dead, but living unto thee.

Christian Science is mistaken in supposing that pain and sickness are not real. They are as real as death, to which they conduct.

But as there is an inner citadel which death cannot enter, so there is a hidden life which pain cannot torment and sickness cannot weaken. There is a real decay which destroys the husk, but the husk is destroyed that the seed emancipated may rise into the light and air of the world above its prison-house. So there is a death which destroys the body; this death is real; the sicknesses and pains which accompany us in this life are meant to be reminders of the fact that for us emancipation is coming; but pain, sickness, and death are all the instruments for emancipation; and we ourselves, the true, the divine,

the immortal selves, are untouched by them.

Doubtless there are some passages in Scripture which seem inconsistent with this view. But there are no passages in Christ's teaching which, properly interpreted, do not accord with it. Most of them explicitly confirm it. The Old Testament writers knew little or nothing of immortality. Of the New Testament writers, Paul in his first letter to the Thessalonians seems to imply a different conception. "If we believe," he says, "that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. . . . For the

Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." But the First Epistle to the Thessalonians does not contain Paul's ripest thought. It was written very early in Paul's experience, while he yet believed that Jesus was to return to the earth within the lifetime of men then living. His riper thought is to be found in the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Underlying this chapter is the faith which he still more explicitly expresses in his letter to the Philippians—to die is

"to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better." Isolated and enigmatical texts cannot counter-vail the generic teaching which the New Testament emphasizes throughout, that a life personally in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ and nourished by him is always a life eternal; that the life of righteousness, unselfishness, and serviceableness never dies, never ceases to exist, but ever lives with an ever-increasing fullness.

GOD SHALL GIVE IT A BODY

GOD SHALL GIVE IT A BODY

HOW, then, shall we think of the resurrection of the body? We shall think that the phrase itself is misleading. We shall think with Paul that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." The body is the house which the man for a little while occupies. Presently its uses are accomplished, it falls into decay, and he goes out into another and larger life, a bet-

ter and nobler house. The only resurrection of the body is into grass and flowers and fruit.

The phrase does not exist in the New Testament. The conception is borrowed from paganism. It grows out of our identification of the person with the tenement in which he dwells. It belongs to the same system of philosophy which attributes to God physical organs and conceives of him as a gigantic man. It has the same unspiritualistic character as the idolatry which represents God, who is spirit, in visible and tangible forms. It offers us for our enduring affection not the faith, the hope, the

love; not the spirit which looked up not down, forward not backward, out not in; but the robe which this spirit wore, the instrument which this spirit used. It is the product of our sensuousness. It is a source of almost unendurable agony to him who, tormented by this conception, sees his mother, his wife, his friend lowered into the grave and hears the sod falling on the coffin. It makes the doctrine of immortality seem irrational, because it identifies with faith in immortality belief in the miraculous preservation of the decaying body, and its recovery again to life when all its particles have been scattered everywhither.

The only justification for its retention in the Apostles' Creed is the fact that it is an ancient symbolical expression of faith in personal immortality, coined at a time when the person was identified with his body. It is a symbolical expression of faith in an immortality other and more than that of impersonal influence on the one hand, and of absorption into the Eternal on the other.

Science prohibits belief in the resurrection of the entombed flesh and blood; spiritual experience protests against any such sensuous identification of the immortal spirit with the mortal body; and the Scripture

in explicit terms contradicts the pagan notion which has been engrafted on the Scripture. The only passage in the New Testament which deals in terms with the resurrection of the body is the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and in the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians Paul repudiates the doctrine of the bodily resurrection in explicit terms. How are the dead raised, and with what manner of body do they come? They come as the grain comes from the seed. The seed does not rise; it remains and molders in the earth. The body does not rise; it remains

and molders in the earth. But God gives it a body even as it hath pleased him: to each seed a body of its own, to each spirit a body of his own. All flesh is not the same flesh. As each animal has its own kind of body, so each epoch of life. There are celestial bodies for the celestial life, as there are terrestrial bodies for the terrestrial life. There is a natural body; there is also a spiritual body; each of its own kind, each having its own uses. While we are on the earth we need the earthy body; when we pass from the earth into heaven we shall need the heavenly body. We cannot carry further the body we had here.

If it were raised from the grave it would be useless, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither can corruption inherit incorruption. Even those that are living at the last great day must pass through a transition to have the mortal and corruptible body put on immortality and incorruptibility.

Think not, O mother, of your child as lying lonely in the grave, the snow its winding-sheet or the spring flowers its funeral offerings. He is not there, he never was there. You have not committed him to the grave; you are not to go there in quest of him. You have given him back to the Father who gave

him to you. You have put him in the arms of Christ, that Christ may bless him. The voice of death is but the voice of the Master saying to you, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

HOW SHALL WE THINK OF THE DEAD?

HOW SHALL WE THINK OF THE DEAD?

A FRIEND has asked me to tell her how to think of the dead. The question is one which sooner or later we all ask ourselves. I cannot tell another how he should think of the dead; I can only tell him how I think of them. I think of them as I think of the living, for my thoughts respecting the two are essentially identical.

It is the postulate of all my

thinking that there are two worlds —an outer and an inner, a material and a spiritual, a world governed by inflexible law and a world of self-governed liberty, a world discerned by eye and ear and touch, and a world discerned by consciousness. If the philosopher assures me that these two are one, I do not dispute him; perhaps they are; but in all my thinking I think of them as two worlds, coöperative but contrasted. I think of an eternal Spirit as ever manifesting himself in and through the material world, a perpetual but invisible Presence, veiled, yet revealed in all phenomena; a love of beauty in

all forms of beauty, an intellectual skill in all mechanical contrivances, a true spiritual consciousness in all seemingly unconscious operations of nature; an ever-present and eternal Energy from whom all things proceed—an Energy whose thought is in all nature's ingenuities, whose purpose is in all life-processes. I conceive of him, the ever-conscious Artist in every flower, the ever-conscious Artisan in all correlated forces, the All-Father in all history and in all lives. I conceive him setting me off from himself, as a spark is struck by the hammer from the red-hot iron, to be, like him, a lover of beauty and a cre-

ator of beauty, a lover of truth and an utterer of truth, a lover of righteousness and a doer of righteousness; and yet, like him, free to choose the ugly, the false, the unrighteous; and because thus free, fitted to be his companion; able to be at one with him or to separate myself from him, able to think his thoughts, share his purposes, be partaker of his life, or to be indifferent or averse to him; capable of being his companion and his friend, and therefore capable of being his enemy.

This spirit which has sprung from him and makes me in my powers divine, however undivine I

may be in the use I make of these powers, also manifests itself in material forms. These material forms may be the creation of my powers, yet wholly apart from me, as is the picture from the artist; or my creation and in their nature at once a part of me and separated from me, as the song is at once one with and apart from the singer; or a part of the habitation in which I dwell and which I have built up and remodeled from within, as the eye when it flashes with the fire of anger or the lips when they part in the smile of love. But neither picture, song, nor smile is myself nor any true part of myself; they

are but manifestations of myself, as the flash of lightning or the flower of the field is no part of God, but only a manifestation of God. The picture is not the artist, the song is not the singer, the smile is not the child; the smile is only a subtler and finer manifestation of the soul than any which the song or the brush can furnish.

This is the postulate of all my thinking—about God, about myself, about my fellow-men, about life. What I think about the dead could be comprehended only as one first comprehended this larger thought which includes alike the living and the dead; the past,

the present, and the future; science, mechanics, art, and poetry; nature, history, and biography; God and the individual soul.

If one accepts this postulate as, let us say, a hypothetical basis for his thinking, he can easily distinguish three vaguely defined stages in the growth of the individual. In the first stage the material organs minister to the life of the spirit. The spiritual life of father, mother, teacher, friend, is manifested by the eye, the ear, the touch, and through these avenues of approach the spirit of the child is developed. By means of these organs he learns to observe, to reflect, to reason, to feel, to pur-

pose. If these organs are wanting, the process of development is much more difficult, though, as if to show that there is a spiritual life as well as a physical life, spiritual development is not impossible. In the second stage such growth of the spirit as can be inspired through physical organs has been substantially attained, and the organs are used as means whereby the still growing spirit ministers to other embodied spirits. By his painting the artist develops the latent love of beauty in others; by his voice or his pen the teacher or the orator develops their intelligence or their affections. In the third stage the

organs begin to appear as a drag upon the spirit. The artist is conscious of a beauty which he cannot interpret through the brush; the poet of truths which he cannot frame into verse; the orator of a life which transcends all his powers of expression. While all others are praising his creations he is growing increasingly dissatisfied with them. His life has grown at once too large and too delicate to be expressed by the tools with which he is furnished. He longs at times for a subtler brush with which to depict beauty, a finer language than words afford to express his inexpressible life. Moreover, as he begins to

feel the need of finer tools, they begin to grow poorer. His eye begins to lose the keenness of its vision; his hand the deftness of its touch; his sluggish brain refuses to obey his call; the words which used to come in flocks at his bidding come slowly and singly or not at all. Sometimes the spirit remains in its prison long after it has ceased to be a palace beautiful, as if to show us how dreadful this world would be were we all to live our life here after the material organs had ceased to be a help and had become a hindrance. But generally before this time comes the prison walls fall away, and the emancipated

spirit enters upon a new though unseen habitation fitted for its larger development; the dulled tools that are losing their value are taken away, and the worker is given a new equipment in the new world for the richer, finer life to which, after this brief earthly schooling, he is called. The body, its purposes all served, returns to the earth from which it came, and the spirit, set free, enters upon the career for which it has been unconsciously preparing.

I think, then, of death as a glad awakening from this troubled sleep which we call life; as an emancipation from a world which, beautiful though it be, is still a land

of captivity; as a graduation from this primary department into some higher rank in the hierarchy of learning. I think of the dead as possessing a more splendid equipment for a larger life of diviner service than was possible to them on earth—a life in which I shall in due time join them if I am counted worthy of their fellowship in the life eternal.

Do they know us, love us, hope for our coming? Shall we know them, love them, and may we hope for their fellowship? Surely. What is there left to be immortal in us if love and hope die? To exist without love and hope is not to live;

to exist with hope always disappointed and love always denied would hardly be to live. What Scripture and philosophy alike promise to us is eternal life, not eternal sleep, and faith, hope, and love are the essentials of life.

I would not lay too much stress on the intimations of Scripture. I recognize the difference between its clear revelation and its poetic suggestions; but so far as its suggestions may be counted of value, they all indicate the continuance there of love, which alone makes life worth living here. Moses and Elijah are recognized by Peter, James, and John on the Mount of

Transfiguration. Paul says, "To depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better." Christ says, "That where I am, there ye may be also." But we are not with him of whose presence we cannot have knowledge. Does not Christ say, "They neither marry nor are given in marriage in heaven"? Yes; but he also says, "They are as the angels of God in heaven." Are the angels without acquaintance, fellowship, hope, love? Marriage is partly sensuous, partly spiritual. It is the spiritual only that remains in the land of resurrection; but faith, hope, and love are spiritual.

For the rest, I neither know nor

wish to know what the future life has for me. I would not, if I could, stand at the open window and peer into the unknown beyond. I am sure that He whose mercies are new every morning and fresh every evening, who brings into every epoch of my life a new surprise, and makes in every experience a new disclosure of his love, who sweetens gladness with gratitude, and sorrow with comfort, who gives the lark for the morning and the nightingale for the twilight, who makes every year better than the year preceding, and every new experience an experience of his marvelous skill in gift-giving, has for

me some future of glad surprise which I would not forecast if I could.

I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

I know not where his islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond his love and care.

THE PRACTICE OF IMMORTALITY

THE PRACTICE OF IMMORTALITY

THE difference between the mortal and immortal life is not made by death. The immortal life is the life which pain, sickness, and death cannot terminate. It is the life of faith, of hope, of love. Such life is immortal life, because mortality cannot touch it. The body is always dying; it is in an ever-perpetual process of decay: but the spirit of faith, hope, and

love is in no process of decay; it is not mortal. It is eternal because it stands in no time-relation; not because it begins beyond the confines of time, — there are no confines, — but because it has no time-boundaries. Christ was as immortal when hanging apparently helpless on the cross as when he rose from the tomb. Death could not hold him, because there was something in him which death could not lay hands upon. He was always immortal.

All life has its laws. If we obey the laws of the spiritual life we have a right to spiritual life. There are laws of the body; and

if one complies with these laws, he has a right to health. So there are laws of the spirit; and if one obeys them, he has a right to expect spiritual life, which, because it is the life of the spirit, is a deathless life.

Not all men wish for immortality. They wish to live forever, but living forever is not immortality. Immortality is living the life that cannot die, because it is the life of the spirit. If we wish to believe in such life as a life hereafter, we must believe in it as the life worth living here; if we wish to possess it hereafter, we must wish to possess it here. Do we?

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Do we hunger and thirst after righteousness? "Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love." Is this the sum in addition which we are really making in our lives? Or is it, add to your house lands; and to your lands furniture; and to your furniture luxurious living; and to your luxurious living stocks and bonds; and to your stocks and bonds social position?

Paul promises eternal life "to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honor, and immortality." How can any one who by perpetual compromise with evil-doing seeks for wealth and place and fame expect eternal life? "We look," he says, "not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." If we habitually look on the things which are seen and are temporal, what reason have we to expect that we shall have faith in the things which are not

seen and are eternal? Faith in immortality is looking at the things which are not seen. It is not a conclusion reached by demonstration; it is a habit of mind.

Immeasurably pathetic to me is my experience in receiving letters from men and women who have lived a self-satisfied and self-contented life until suddenly death has come and taken away the child or wife or mother or husband; and then comes a longing for something better, and the letter to me asks, What book can I read, what argument can you give, that will prove immortality? Immortality cannot be demonstrated, like a problem

from Euclid, on a blackboard. How can I prove the spirituality of Beethoven's music to one who has never cared for music? Life comes first, beliefs afterward. Stars were before astronomy, flowers before botany, language before grammar, and religion before theology. We must live before we can believe. If I would have a right to the tree of life, if I would have a right to know that there is a tree of life, I must seek this immortal life here, and seek it from the God who is here, and seek it through the channels that he opens for us. If we live here and now the immortal life, then, if we are mistaken and there

is no life after the grave, still we shall have been immortal. It were better to live an immortal life and be robbed of the immortality hereafter by some supernal power than to live the mortal, fleshly, animal life, and live it endlessly. Who would not rather have a right to immortality than be immortal without a right to be? For myself, I can think of no doom so terrible as that I should live on an endless and worthless life; like the Wandering Jew, condemned to wander through all the ages with nothing in life to live for. What would life be without faith or hope or love?

If we are to pluck the fruit from the tree of life, we must have a right to it. If we would have a rational hope in life hereafter, we must have the immortal life here. To have faith in immortality we must practise immortality.

PICTURE-TEACHING

PICTURE-TEACHING

THE pictures in the New Testament are not mere ornaments. They are revelations. Four pictures of death in the New Testament give through the imagination the same interpretation that is given by its philosophy and the recorded experience of its writers.

"Death is sleep," the Hebrew Psalmist had said. The New Testament repeats the figure: "Lazarus sleepeth;" "She is not dead, but

sleeping." When Stephen falls a martyr under the shower of stones, it is said of him, "He fell asleep." This is the first figure. The child is weary with his toil and sated with his play. The long shadows fall aslant the lawn, and the mother, wiser than her child, goes to the door and calls him in. Fretfully and reluctantly he comes, answering her beckoning. He does not wish to leave his sports, he wishes still to stay, and she takes him to her arms and rocks him to sleep, that she may fit him for new toil and new happiness on the morrow. Death is Christ standing at the door and saying, Children, your work is over,

your plays are done, and twilight has come; let me give you rest;— and we, fretfully and reluctantly answering the summons, come weeping to the grave that will give us what he gives his beloved — sleep.

Death is an exodus. It is said that on the Mount of Transfiguration Christ spoke of the exodus which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem; it was as a going forth from a land of bondage to a land of liberty. The children of Israel are in Goshen. They are fed, clothed, housed; but they are slaves. When Moses comes to summon them, they hesitate to respond

to his summons. They dread the Red Sea, and the long wilderness journey, and the experiences through which they must pass to the Promised Land. But nevertheless his is a message of emancipation and deliverance. We are in a land of Goshen, in bondage to our flesh. Who does not sometimes feel the limitations of his own body? Who does not sometimes feel as though he could understand the impatient bird that wishes to spring from the cage and fly away? Death is the voice of Moses saying to men, "You are to be slaves no longer; you are to be bound by your chains no more; the land of

liberty is before you." Death is a proclamation of emancipation.

Death is unmooring. "The time of my unmooring," says Paul, "is at hand." The ship is fastened to the wharf, lying there to be finished. It stands in the stays, and the workmen are still upon it with hammer and saw. Such are we in this life. No man is ever finished. We are here in the making. We are upon the stays, where with tool and implement, with saw and hammer, we are wrought upon,—sometimes very much to our discontent,—until by a long, slow process a man is made; and then when the time has come and God is ready,

he knocks away the underpinning, and the ship breaks from its ways out into the element which we do not understand, but the element for which God is preparing him. In Mrs. Gatty's "Parables from Nature" is a beautiful parable of the grub of the dragon-fly in the water wondering what the world outside is, of which it sometimes hears, and feeling within itself the strange, inexplicable yearning that it cannot understand, and bidding its companion grubs good-by, saying to them, "If there is another world, as they say there is, I will return and tell you all about it;" and finally climbing up out of the water

into the sunshine, and emerging from the shell and skimming the surface of the water and sailing about in the upper sphere around the pool, but never able to go back and tell what its emancipation has been. Death is an unmooring; it launches us into our true, real element.

Death is home-coming. "I go," Christ says, "to prepare a place for you." We set sail upon an unknown sea, but we go not to a strange land. Here we are pilgrims and strangers; there we shall be at home. From some poor hut in Ireland one after another of the family set sail to America, their

Eldorado — first the sons, then the daughters, last of all the father and mother. With some sorrow in their hearts for the memories of the past, with some fear in their hearts mingled with anticipations of the future, they take their passage in the narrow quarters furnished by the steerage. But when the voyage is over, and they land on this side, the sons and daughters are on the wharf to welcome them. Theirs is really a home-coming. So all of us have sent some friends before us, a brother, a sister, a child, a husband, a wife. When we are summoned to our departure, though the ship be strange and the sea un-

known, we shall be embarking for a land where friends will be awaiting us. To fall asleep here, to wake up there and find ourselves at home—how strange will seem the sudden transition!

Why, then, should we be afraid of death? As on the Christmas Day the father attires himself as Santa Claus, and comes into the room bringing his hands full of gifts, and the little children do not know him, and are frightened at his coming, and cry, and run away, so death is but Christ disguised, coming laden with gifts: rest for the weary one, liberty for the enslaved one, completion to the unfin-

ished and aspiring one, home-coming to the lonely and desolate one. Picture death no longer as a skeleton with scythe and hour-glass; that is pagan. See him luminous and radiant, the cross in his hand, a smile upon his lips, and from him the invitation, Come unto me, ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest, and I will give you life.

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